

# HEPCATS<sup>2</sup>

*martin wagner*

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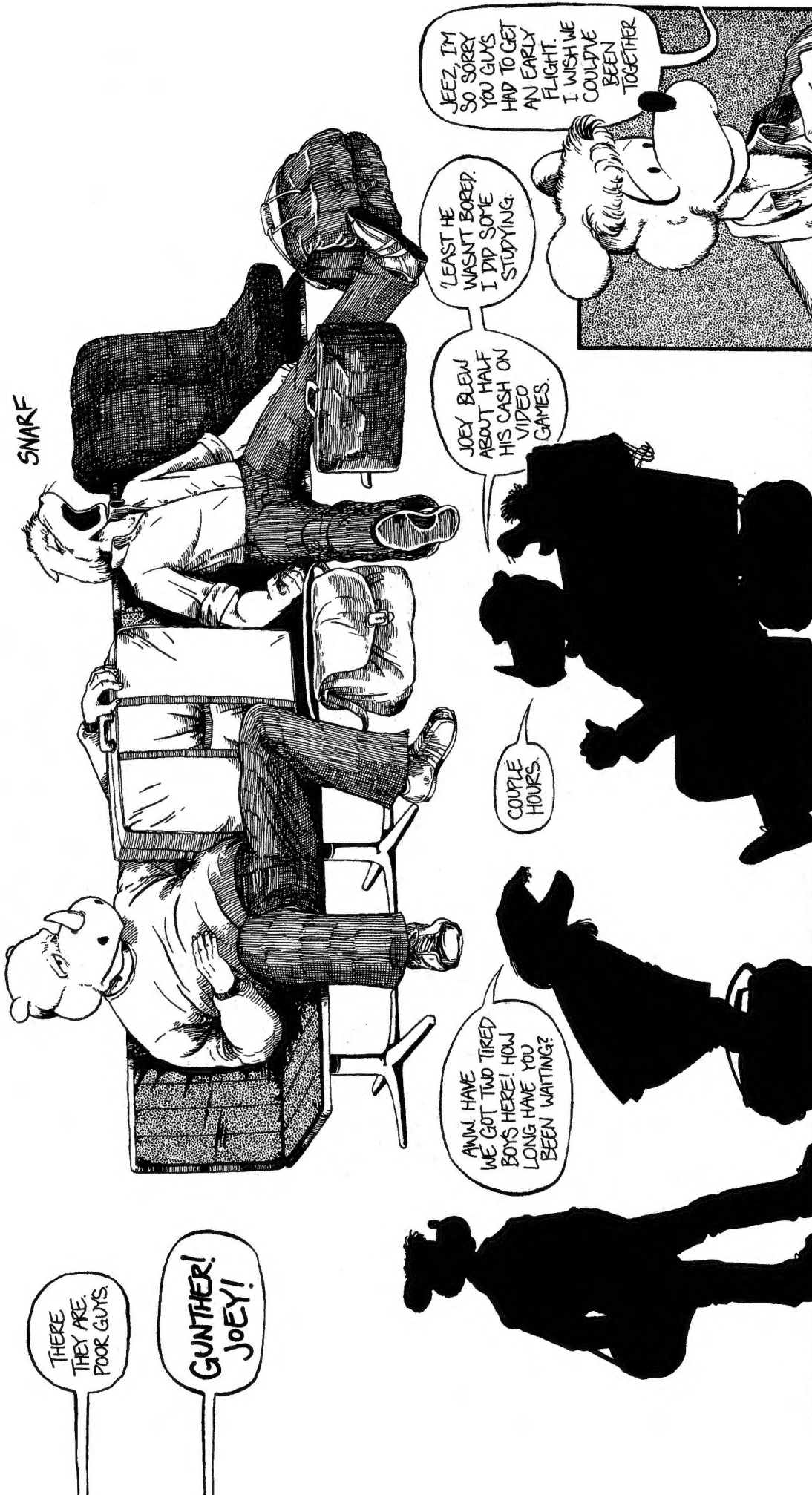
HEPCATS • Martin Wagner • Number 2 • Double Diamond Press • Austin, Texas

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,  
WE'RE MAKING OUR FINAL AP-  
PROACH. TIME IN NEW ORLEANS  
IS 8:45...









THERE THEY ARE. POOR GUYS.

GUNTHER! JOEY!

SNARF

AWWW HAVE WE GOT TWO TIRED BOYS HERE! HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WAITING?

COUPLE HOURS.

JOEY BLEW ABOUT HALF HIS CASH ON VIDEO GAMES.

LEAST HE WASN'T BORED. I DID SOME STUDYING.

KEEZ, I'M SO SORRY YOU GUYS HAD TO GET AN EARLY FLIGHT. I WISH WE COULDVE BEEN TOGETHER.



YEAH, WELL...

WE WOULDVE BEEN IF YOU'D PLANNED THIS BETTER, BABY.

HMM? OH, WOULD YALL ARE HERE...

THERE HE IS! LET'S GO! **ADRIAN!**

**ADRIANNN!** MIMMMFF! IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU!

ERICA... YOU HAVENT CHANGED ONE LITTLE BIT, BABY!

GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK.

...HOMZIT GOIN'?

HEY, YOU MUST BE ARNIE. YOU'RE ONE LUCKY SON OF A BITCH, DUDE.

ADRIAN'S LETTING US CRASH AT HIS PLACE.

WHAT? YOU'RE NOT LEAVING, ARE YOU?!

YEAH, AND YOU LUCKY KIDS ARE GONNA HAVE THE WHOLE PLACE TO YOURSELVES, TOO!

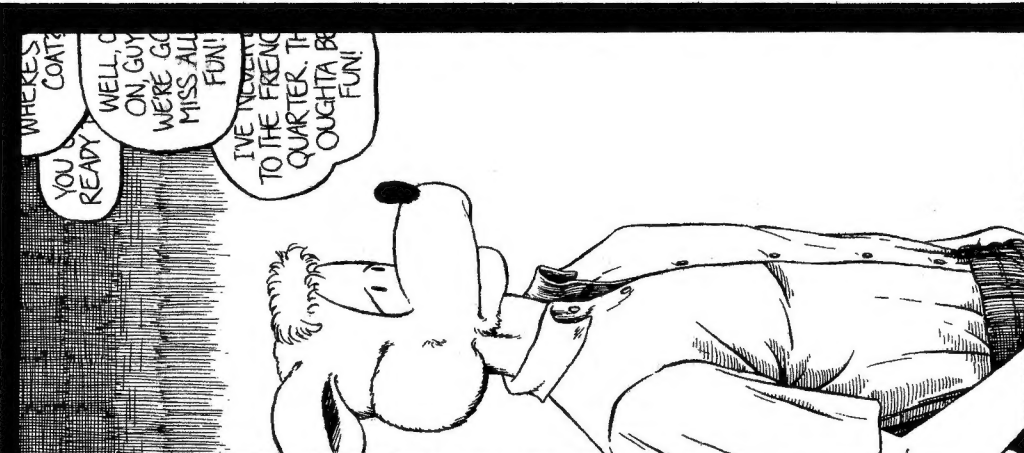
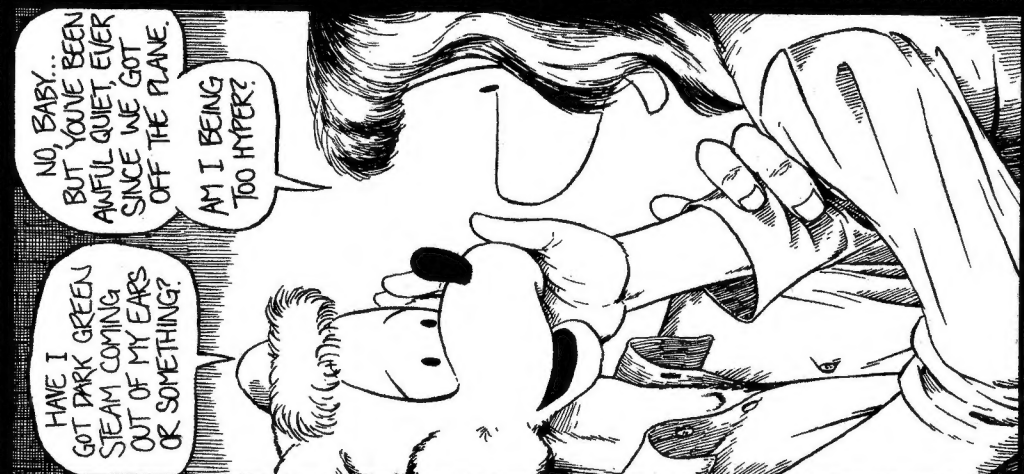
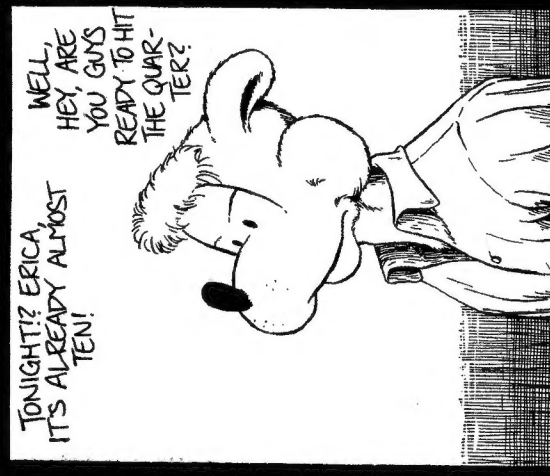
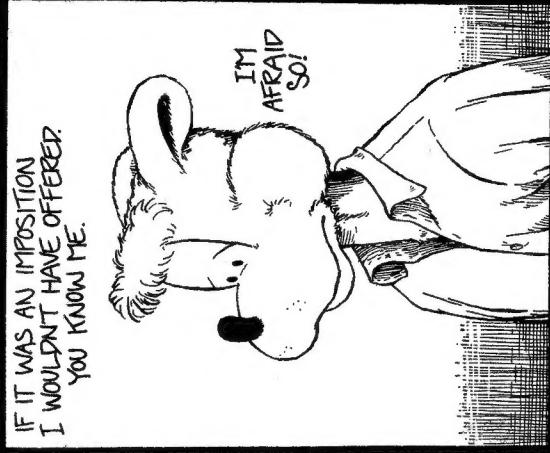
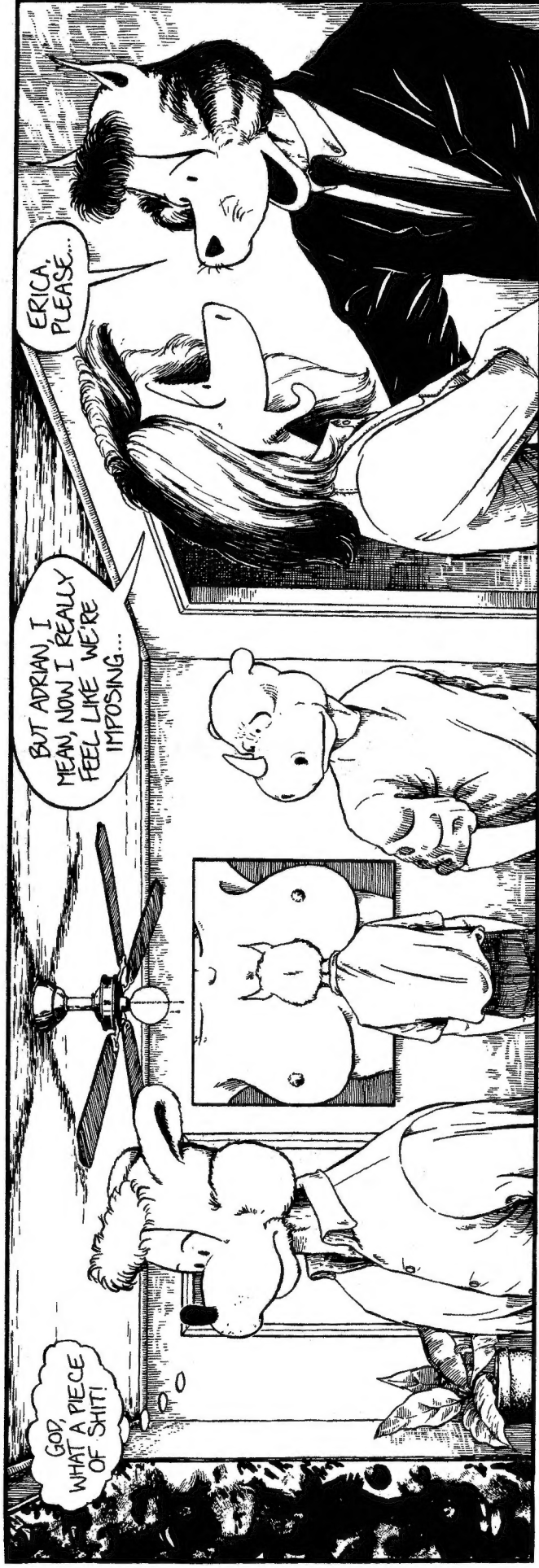


A ONE-MAN SHOW IN LOS ANGELES? OH, ADRIAN, THAT'S WONDERFUL!

IT'S A BRAND NEW GALLERY, TOO. THERE'LL BE A LOT OF PRESS.

WHEE.







SO ADRIAN'S  
GOING HOME?

WELL, HELL, I  
GUESS IT WAS EASIER'N  
TRYING TO FIND A  
PLACE TO PARK.

MAN, YOU AINT  
KIDDING! LOOK  
AT THIS PLACE!—

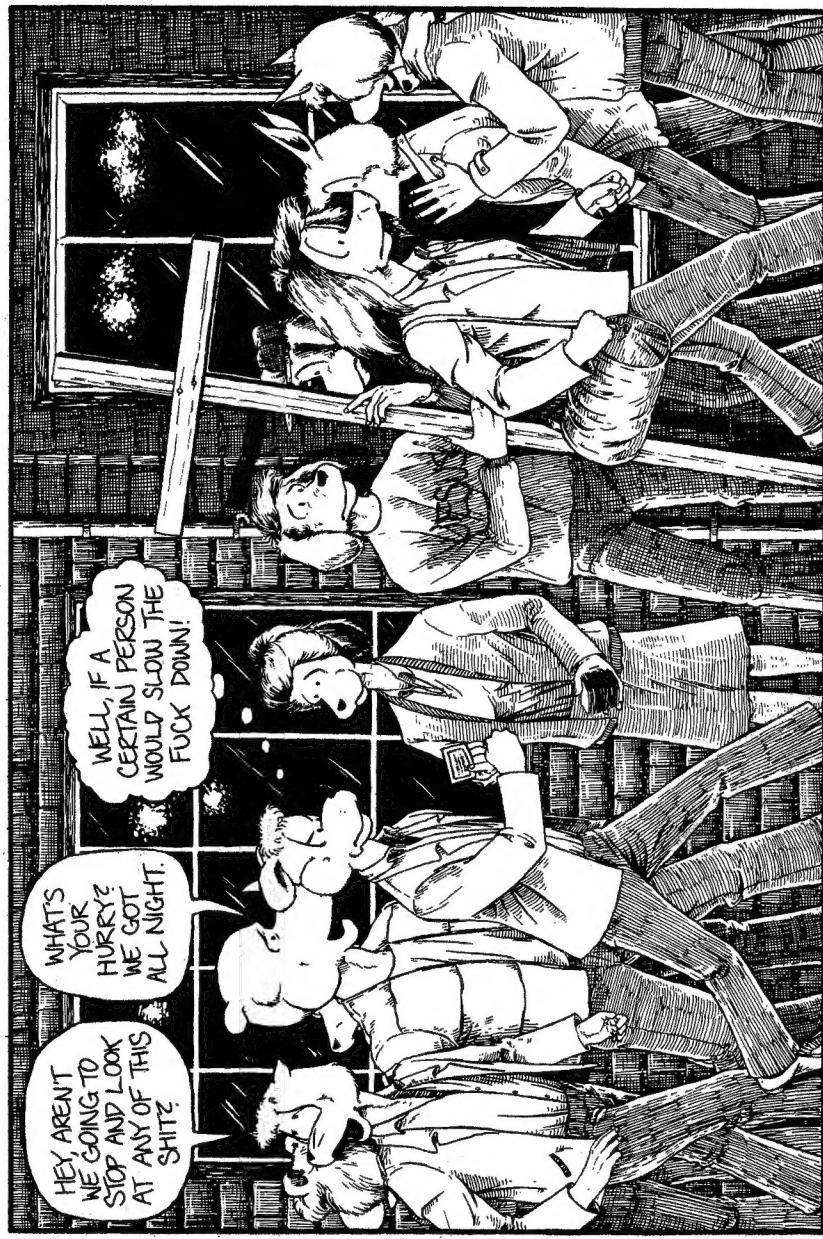
FRENCH QUARTER

# Bourbon



WOW! IS IT  
ALWAYS  
LIKE THIS?

I DOUBT IT. THIS IS  
MARDI GRAS. EVERY TOURIST  
IN THE WORLD MUST  
BE HERE!



HEY, AREN'T  
WE GOING TO  
STOP AND LOOK  
AT ANY OF THIS  
SHIT?

WHAT'S  
YOUR  
HURRY?  
WE GOT  
ALL NIGHT.

WELL, IF A  
CERTAIN PERSON  
WOULD SLOW THE  
FUCK DOWN!

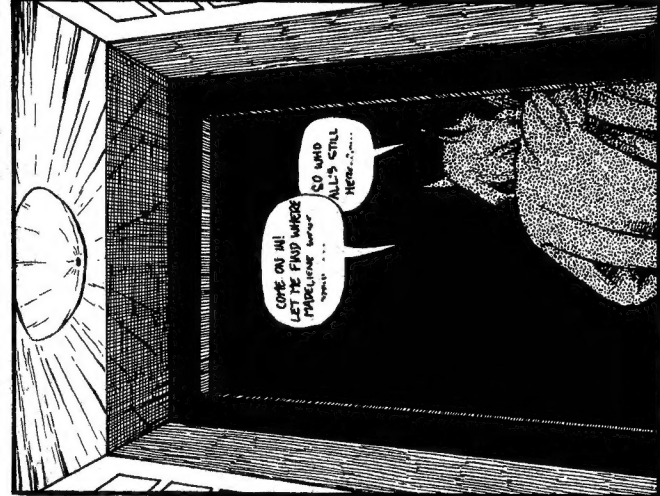


ERICA! I  
WAS BEGINNING  
TO WONDER IF  
YOU WERE GOING  
TO MAKE IT!

MR. WALLACE!  
GOD, IT'S SO GOOD TO  
BE BACK!



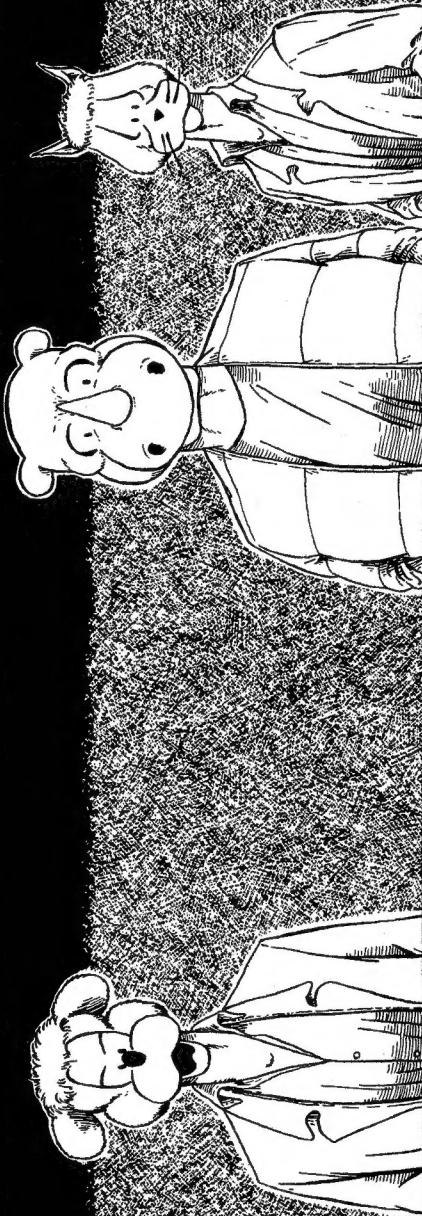
SOME OF THE  
GIRLS COULDN'T  
BELIEVE THEY HEARD  
WHEN THEY HEARD  
YOU WOULD BE  
BACK!



COME ON IN!  
LET ME FIND WHERE  
MADELENE WAS  
HERE.

SO AND  
ALL'S STILL  
HERE.





WELL, I  
GUESS ERICA MADE  
IT TO WORK OKAY, SO  
WHAT DO WE DO?

GO GET DRUNK!  
I DON'T SEE ANY  
REASON TO CHANGE  
ANY OF OUR PLANS.



I LOOKED IN THE  
PAPER THE TAIL END OF  
SOME PARADES SUP-  
POSED TO COME DOWN  
CANAL STREET IN AN  
HOUR....

YOU WANNA GET  
SOMETHIN TO EAT?

DOWN HERE?  
YOU'RE CRAZY!  
THESE GUYS PULL  
OUT THE TOURIST MENUS  
FOR MARDI GRAS!

EVERYTHINGS  
AT LEAST TEN  
BUCKS!





WELL, JESUS,  
THERE'S GOTTA BE A  
MCDONALD'S AROUND  
HERE SOMEWHERE!

LAST THING I ATE  
WAS THAT BAG OF CASHWES  
ON THE PLANE.

I MEAN, COME ON!  
LET'S GET **SOMETHIN'**!

YEAH, OKAY...

SAY... WHAT'S GOING  
ON DOWN THERE?

ARN!

ARNIE!

WE'RE GONNA  
GET SOMETHING  
TO EAT!

HE'S BEEN IN  
A BAD MOOD EVER SINCE  
WE GOT HERE. IS  
HE MAD AT ERICA  
ABOUT SOMETHING?

HE KNEW SHE  
WAS GOING TO  
DANCE, DIDN'T  
HE?

SURE HE DID.  
THERE'S MORE TO  
IT THAN THAT

I DON'T  
KNOW!

SO HOW  
DO YOU KNOW  
THERE'S MORE  
TO IT?

HUH? WELL,  
IT'S OBVIOUS...  
YOU CAN  
TELL WHEN  
THERE'S A  
PROBLEM,  
THAT'S ALL.

NOT REALLY.  
I MEAN,  
HOW DO YOU  
KNOW HE ISN'T  
MAD ABOUT  
SOMETHING  
ELSE  
ENTIRELY?

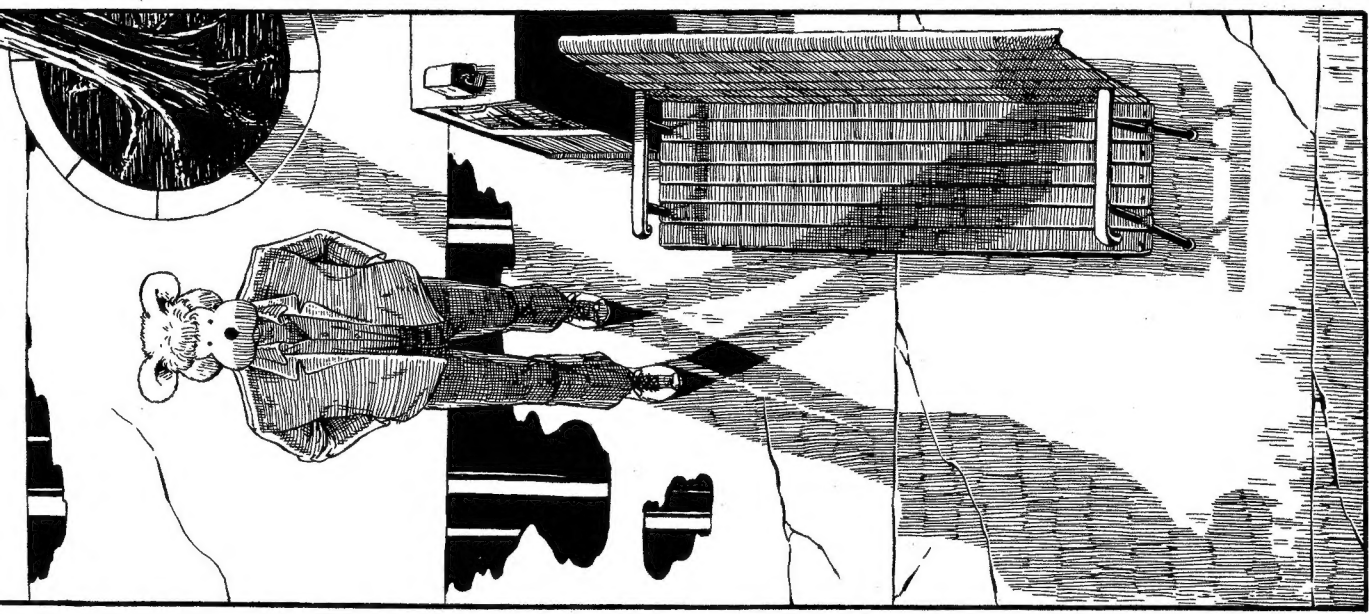
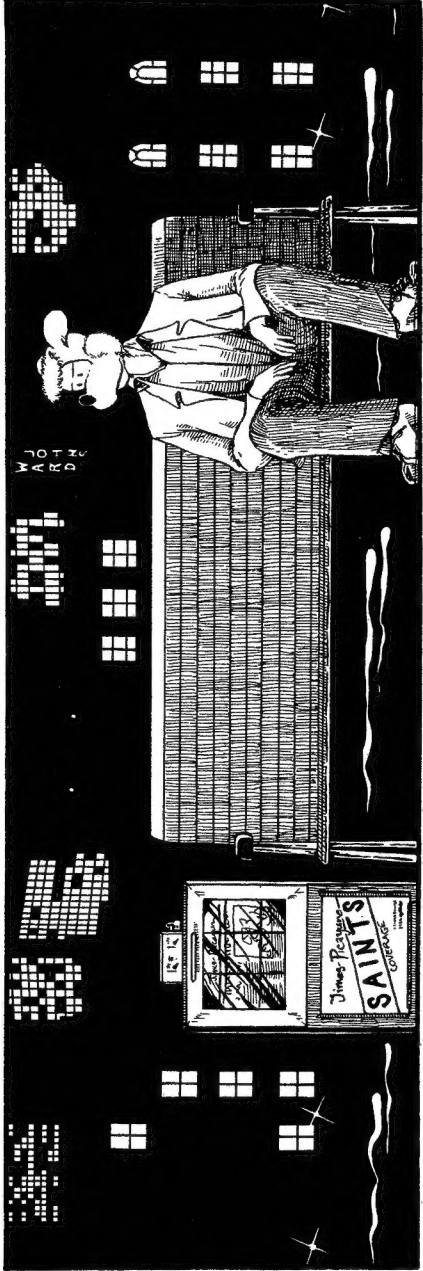
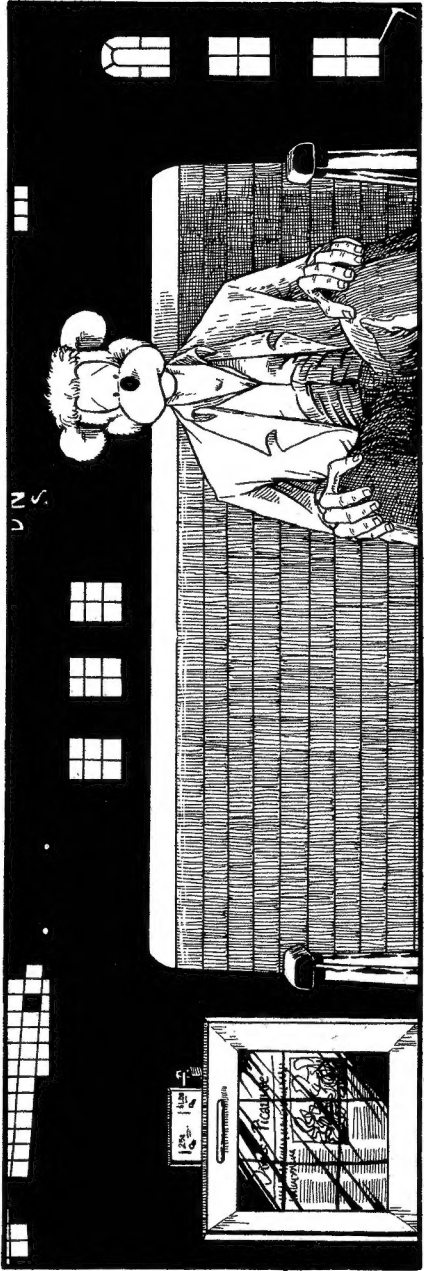
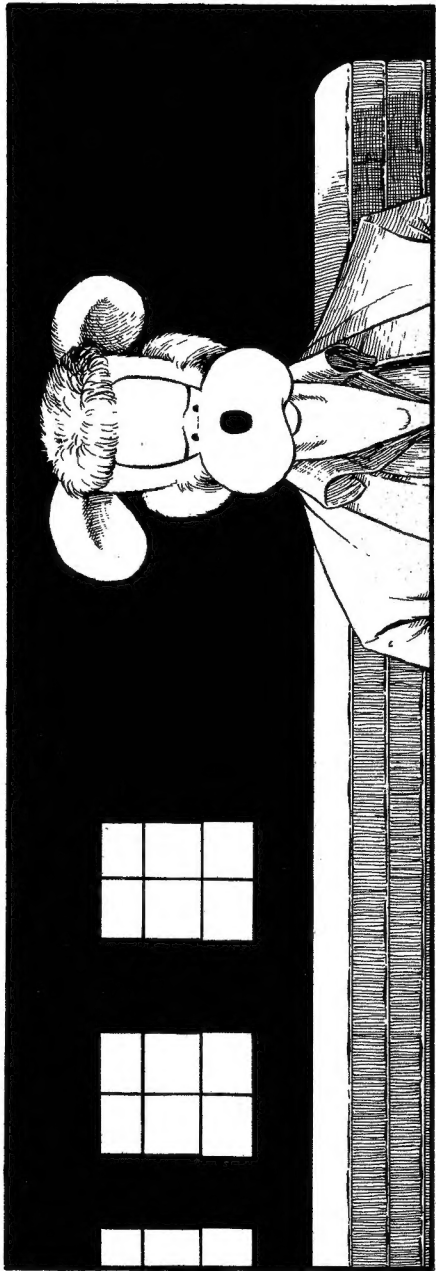
LIKE  
WHAT?

YOU'RE  
A DORK,  
JOEY.

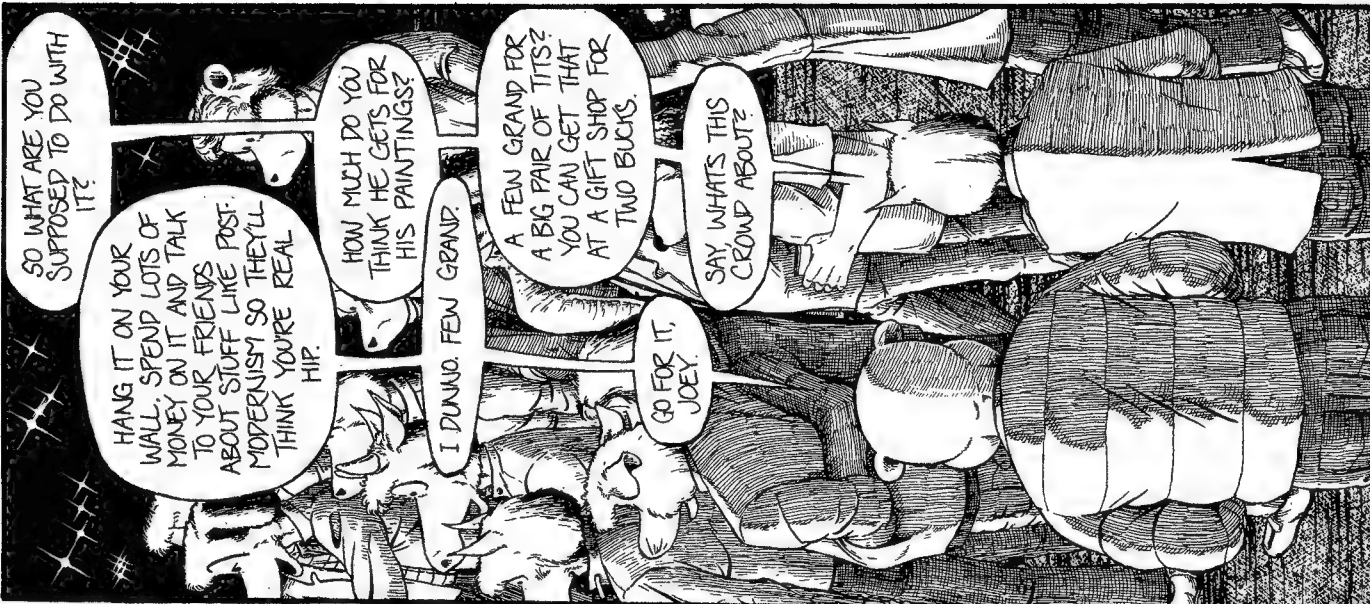
I  
DON'T  
KNOW!

THANK  
YOU!









SO WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO WITH IT?

HANG IT ON YOUR WALL. SPEND LOTS OF MONEY ON IT AND TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT STUFF LIKE POST-MODERNISM SO THEY'LL THINK YOU'RE REAL HIP.

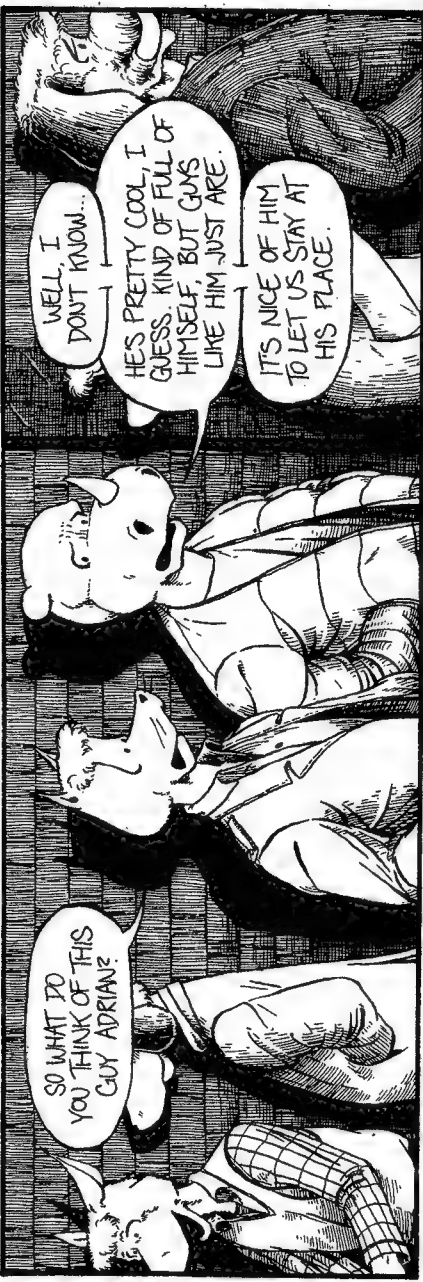
HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK HE GETS FOR HIS PAINTINGS?

I DUNNO. FEW GRAND.

A FEW GRAND FOR A BIG PAIR OF TITS? YOU CAN GET THAT AT A GIFT SHOP FOR TWO BUCKS.

SAY, WHAT'S THIS CROWD ABOUT?

GO FOR IT, JOEY.

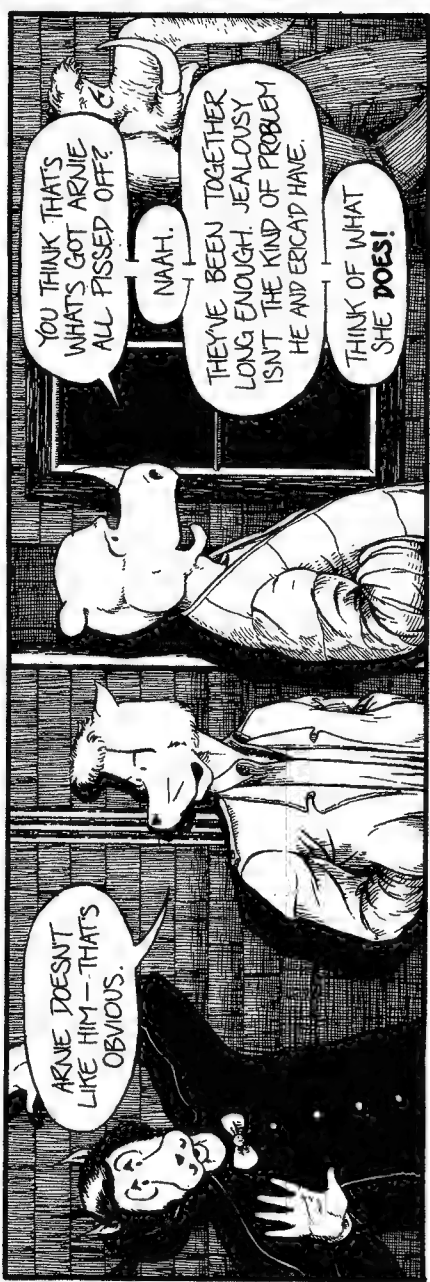


SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS GUY ADRIAN?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW...

HE'S PRETTY COOL, I GUESS. KIND OF FULL OF HIMSELF, BUT GUYS LIKE HIM JUST ARE.

IT'S NICE OF HIM TO LET US STAY AT HIS PLACE.



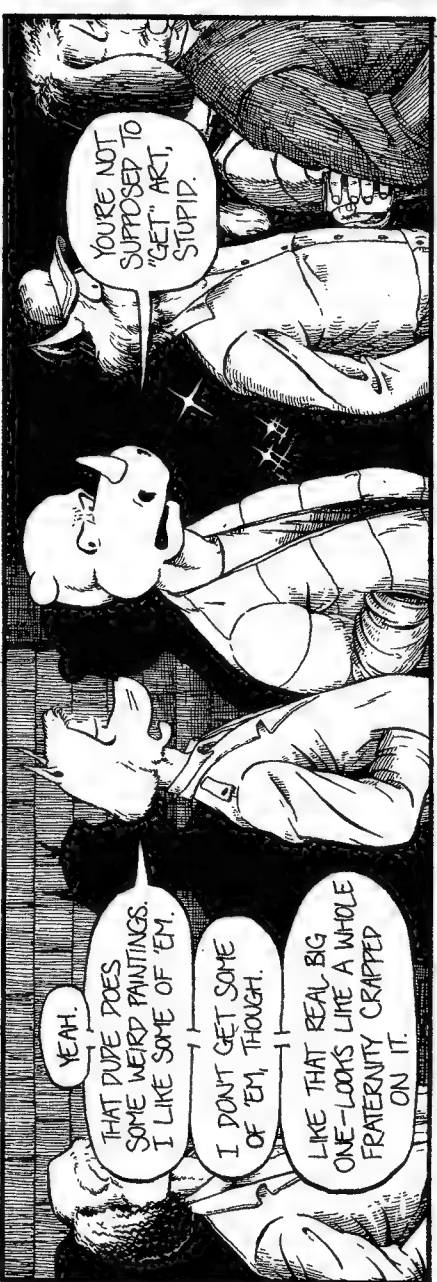
ADRIAN DOESN'T LIKE HIM—THAT'S OBVIOUS.

YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT'S GOT ARNIE ALL PISSED OFF?

NAAH.

THEY'VE BEEN TOGETHER LONG ENOUGH. JEALOUSY ISN'T THE KIND OF PROBLEM HE AND ERICAD HAVE.

THINK OF WHAT SHE DOES!



YEAH.

THAT DUDE DOES SOME WEIRD PAINTINGS. I LIKE SOME OF 'EM.

I DON'T GET SOME OF 'EM, THOUGH.

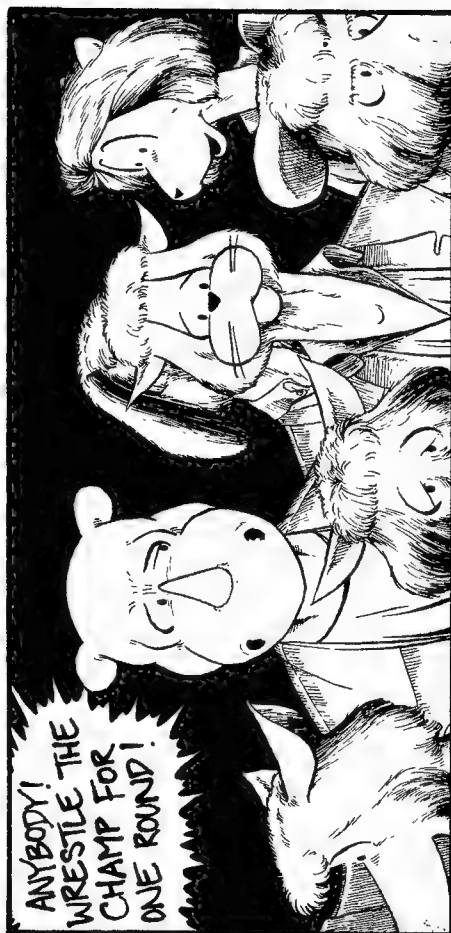
LIKE THAT REAL BIG ONE—LOOKS LIKE A WHOLE FRATERNITY CRAFTED ON IT.

YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO "GET" ART, STUPID.

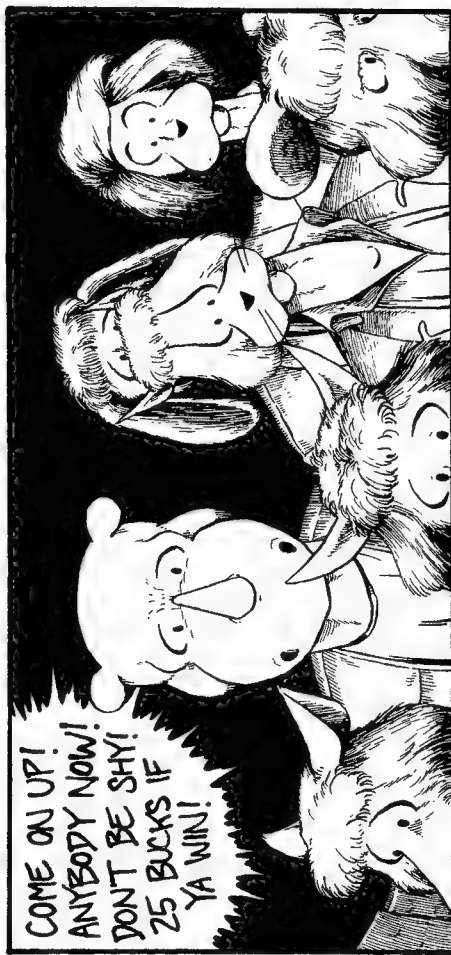




ALL RIGHT!  
DON'T ANY OF YOU  
GUYS THINK YOU  
CAN BEAT THE  
CHAMP? WHADDA  
YA SAY?!

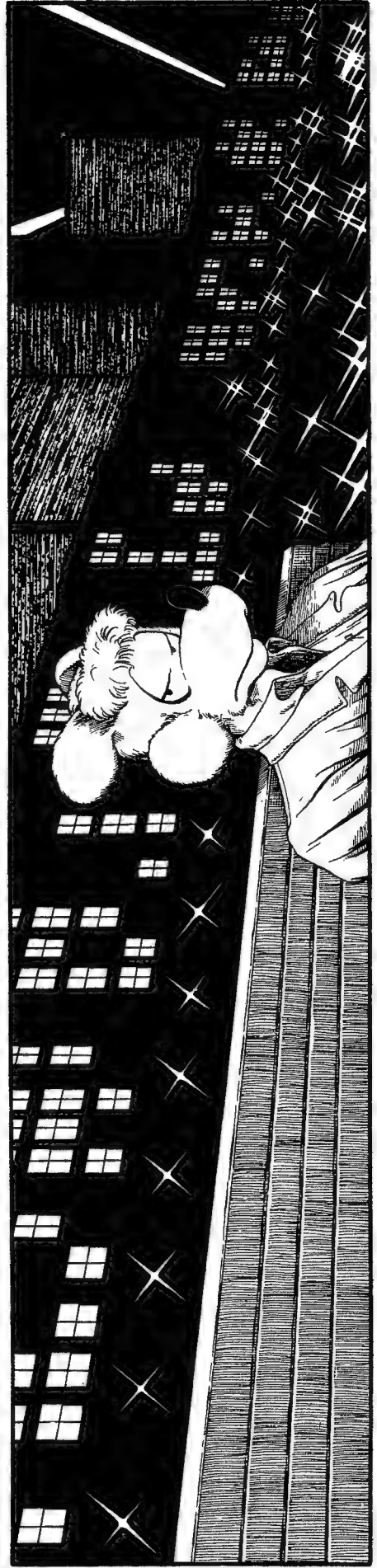


ANYBODY!  
WRESTLE THE  
CHAMP FOR  
ONE ROUND!



COME ON UP!  
ANYBODY NOW!  
DON'T BE SHY!  
25 BUCKS IF  
YA WIN!

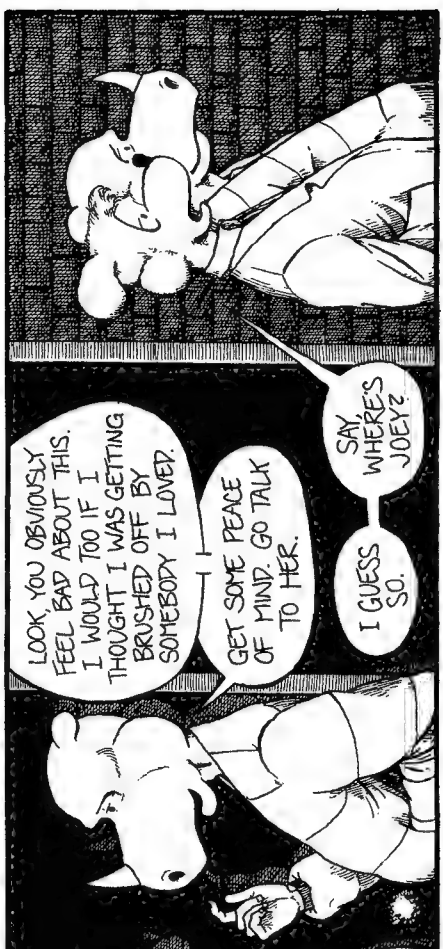
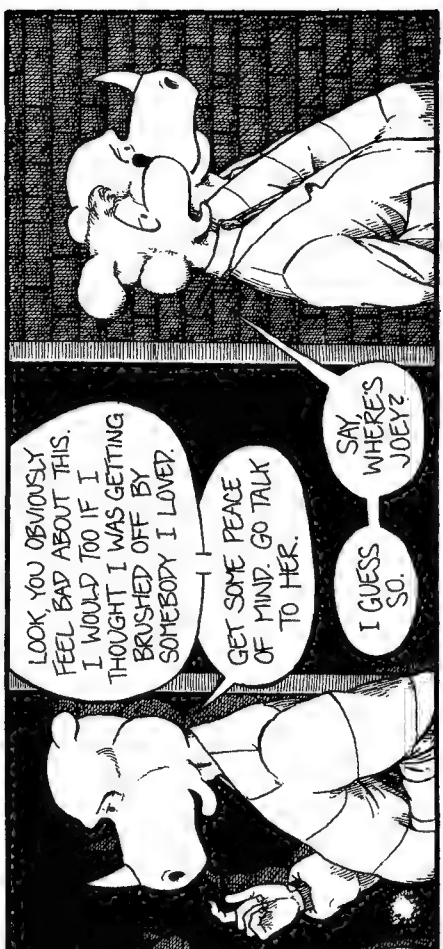
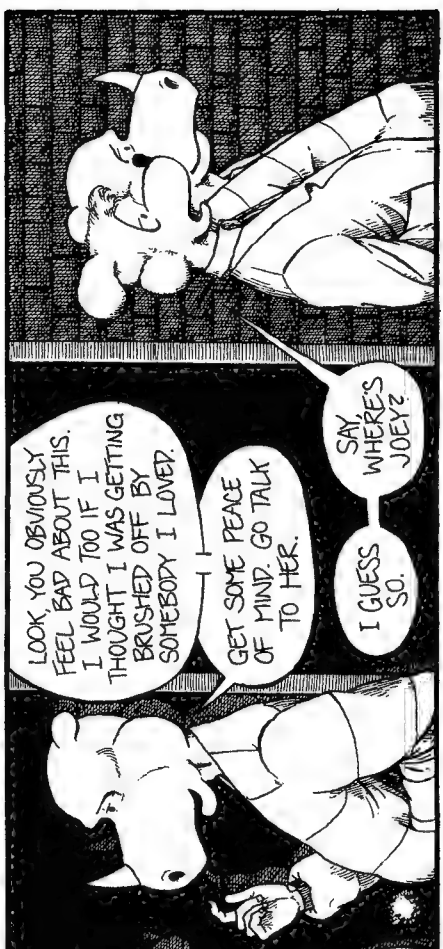
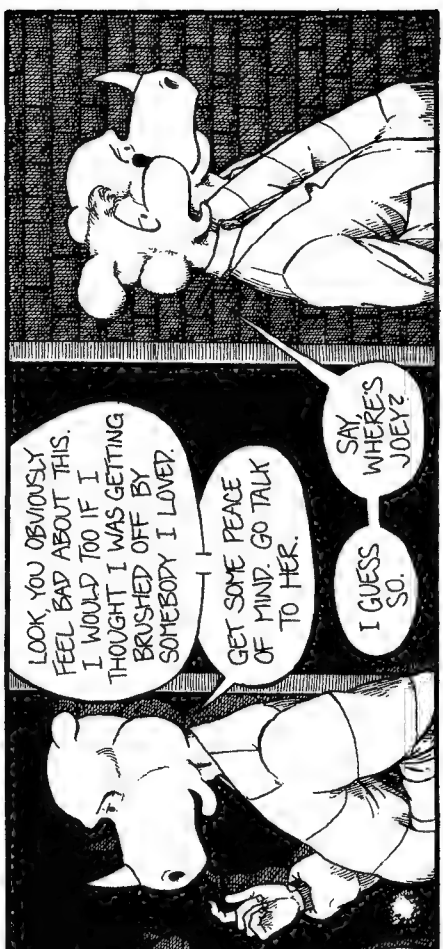
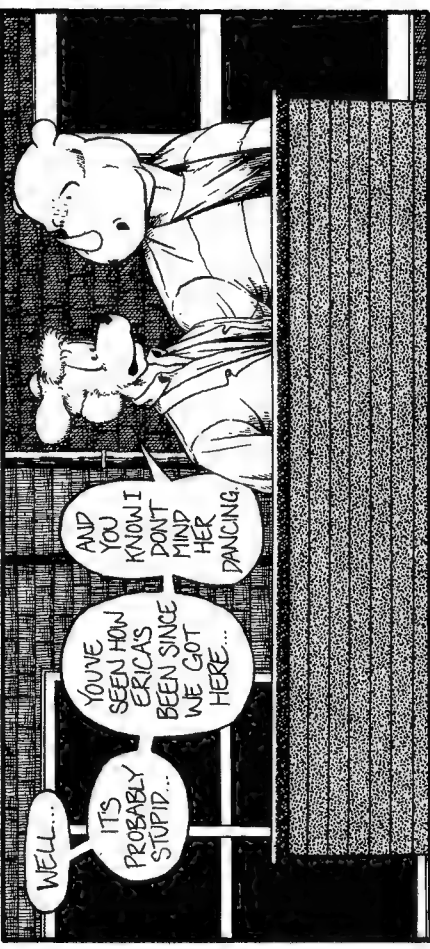
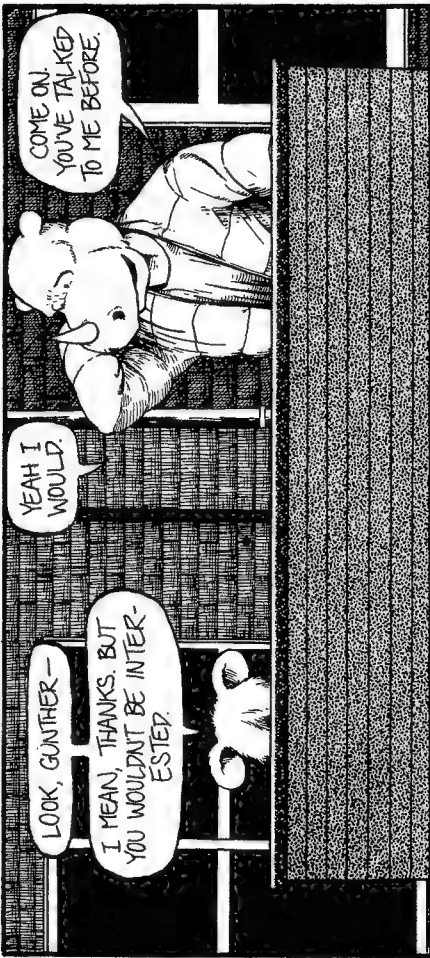
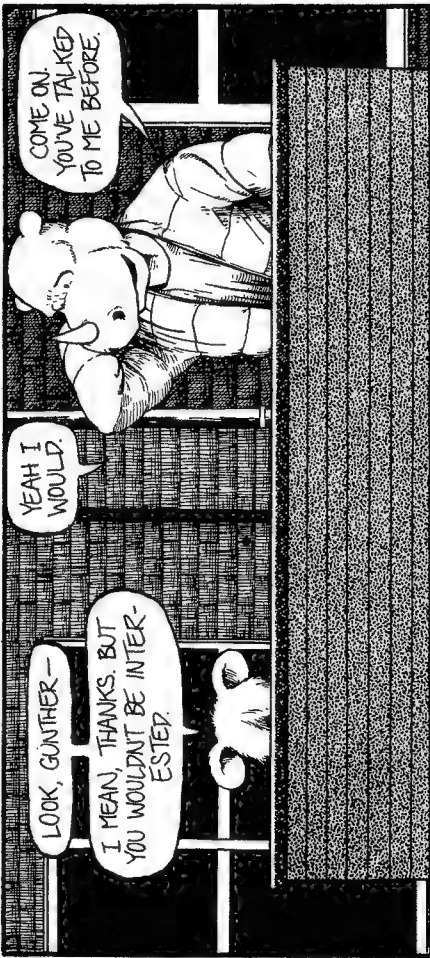
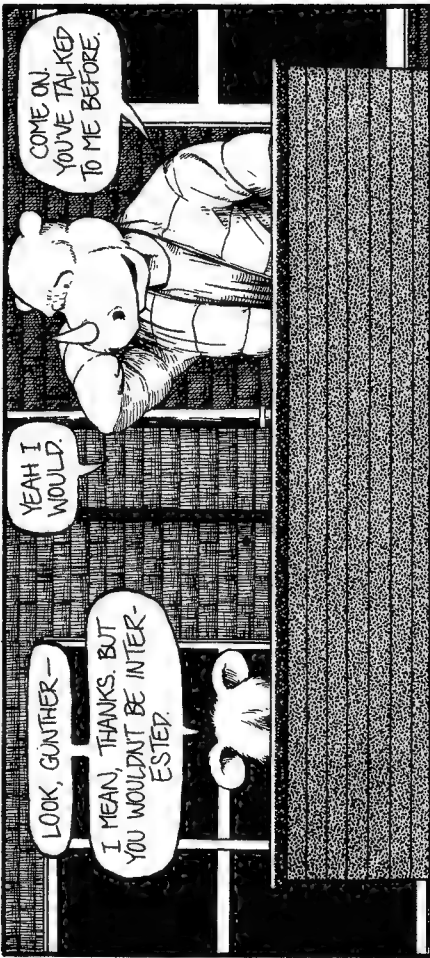
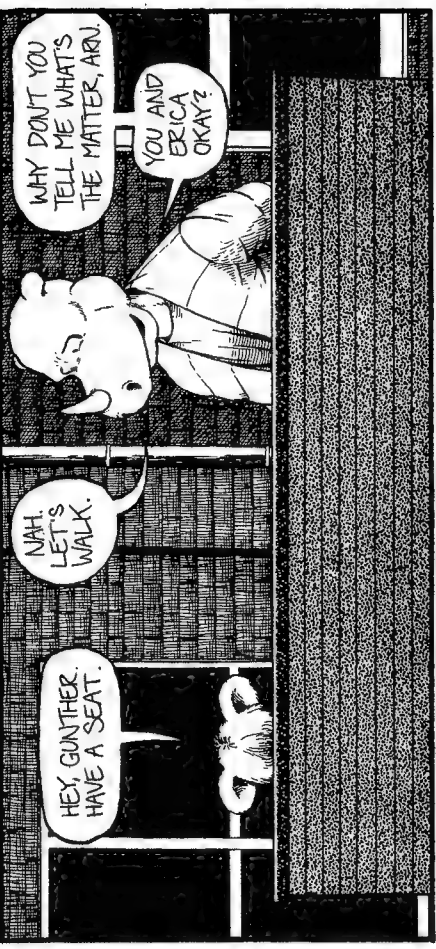
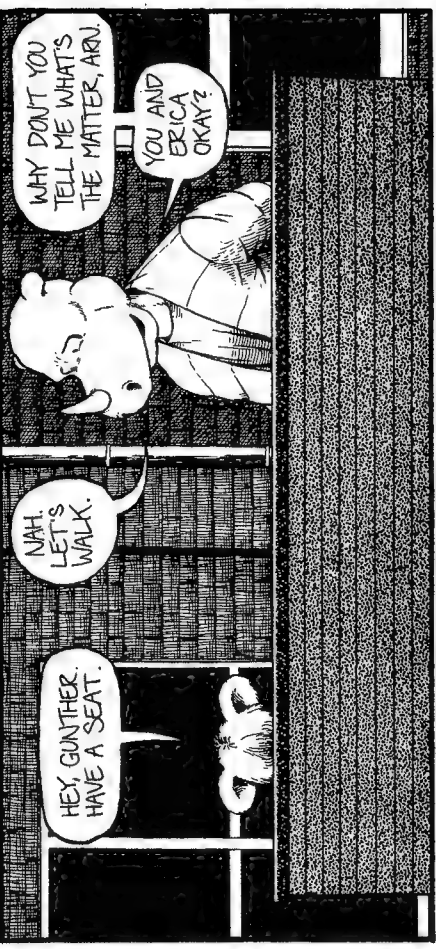
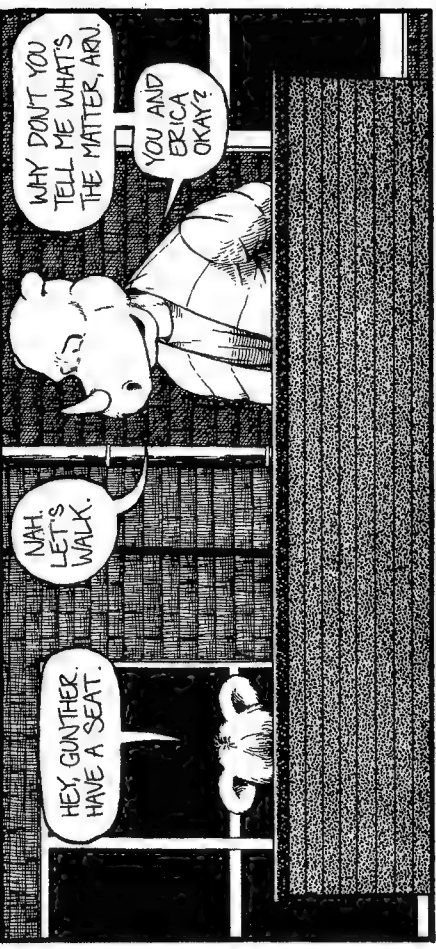
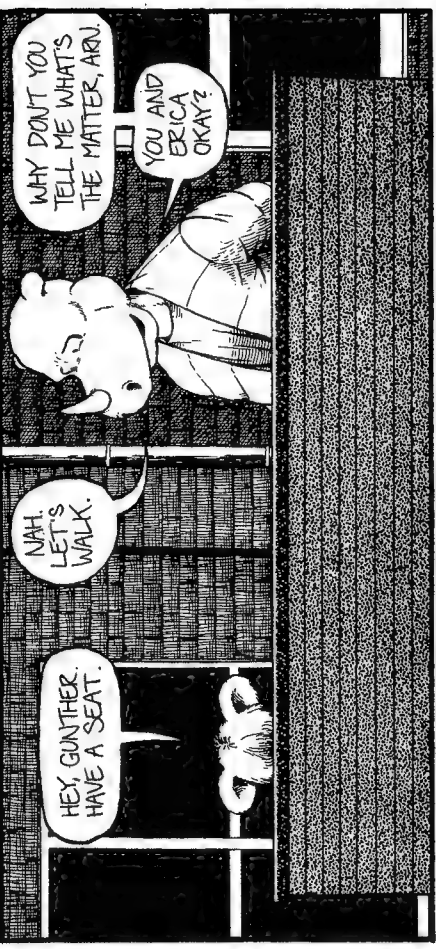
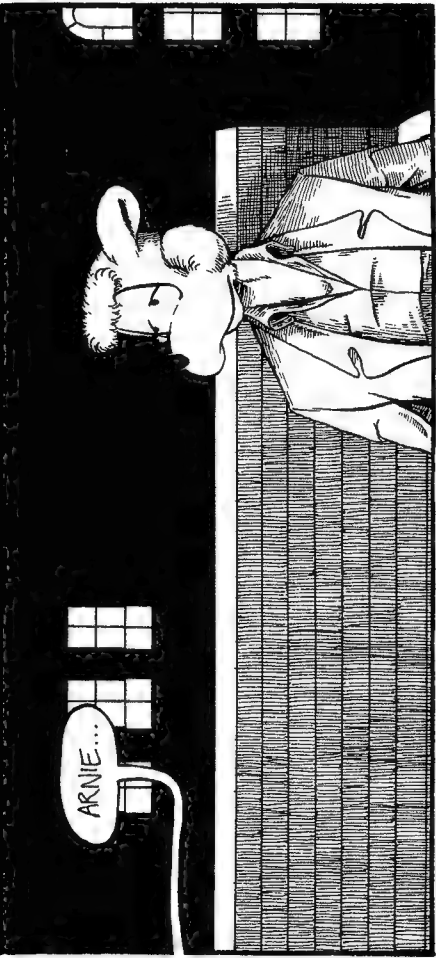




























Bourbon ST

NEW ORLEANS POLICE

1st and 100

DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?

I LOVE YOU...

I SAID...

NOW, HOW DOES ITALIAN SOUND?



# DEAR HEPCATS

7117 WOOD HOLLOW DR., #1728, AUSTIN, TEXAS, 78731

No, *Hepcats* 2 has not appeared so soon after the first issue due to any Johnny-on-the-Spot swiftness of mine. Let's just make a long story short and say that the production of *Hepcats* 1 was fraught with disasters virtually unequalled in modern comics publishing. Simply put, my printer wasn't capable of handling a comics job like he thought he was, and half the time his press wasn't working anyway, and when the first issue shipped eight weeks late...well...let's say I'll be in the mood to talk about it one of these days. (To John's credit, he damn near killed himself trying to make up for it, though.)

I have, needless to say, a new printer now. Port Publications in Wisconsin handles books for several independents, including Fantagraphics, and their efficient, 10-day turnaround and shipping set-up should get me back on my feet schedule-wise and make self-publishing enjoyable again. Hey, we live and learn. Anyway, I suppose it was good that it was the first issue that was so late and not any subsequent ones—otherwise, I'd be having a little trouble with the ol' reputation now. But hey—

we're cookin', we're on time, and everything. I hope you all have liked the two issues you've seen so far, and will tell *all* your friends about them. *Hepcats* is gonna be around a good, long time. Watch.

The story in this issue is based more or less upon the actual incidents surrounding Tif's and my (is that even remotely proper grammar?) trip to Crescent City this year for Mardi Gras. Tif's throwing herself into her dancing the way she did left me a bit flummoxed, though we patched everything up later and chalked the whole affair up to one of those early-in-the-relationship-learning-experiences (though I suspect such experiences are different for guys who don't date exotic dancers). At any rate, I got a story out of it.

Next issue starts something rather exciting. *Snowblind* is my first full-length graphic novel, dealing with the life of Erica. It will run to issue 20. If that sounds like a lot of issues rest assured a lot happens. During my halcyon daily strip days, Erica was always a character that fascinated me, though I did the least with her

developmentally. It's difficult to do meaningful character development in four panels a day anyway, in spite of how much my fans praised the characters. Erica came along because I wanted a girl in the cast (I'd tried several that never worked; it was a lot like real dating), and I finally latched onto the idea of giving Amie—who I'd introduced in a supporting role as a socially inept nerd with a suicidal streak—a girlfriend to, you know, help him celebrate his growth. Amie's suicide story (featured in *Yo*), as I learned, garnered a great deal of attention and was very well received by the *Texan*'s readership—a kneejerk crowd if there ever was one—in spite of the sensitive subject matter.

As I mentioned, though I grew to like Erica a lot, I did little with her, except to introduce her as a stripper for big laff FX in one particular story (I discovered *Omaha* two months later, almost as big a bummer as discovering a rhino in *Usagi Yojimbo*). When I decided upon turning *Hepcats* into a comic book, I was already accustomed myself to longer story formats, and I quickly latched upon the idea of doing Erica's character study as a

way of really getting to know her. Now that the novel is pretty much scripted I'm going crazy to get to work. Long-time readers of *Hepcats* may be a bit surprised; though much of the humor of the series remains intact, the story has a lot of dramatic elements, some strong and unsavory. But I did experiment some with dramatic relief, to coin a phrase, in the *Texan*, and I think the evolution is fairly smooth—and that's what I plan to do with this comic book anyway: evolve.

I hope you all enjoy *Snowblind*, and that it helps you get to know and love Erica as much as I do. It's an exciting tale, it really is, and I look forward to the telling. Look for issue 3 late in August.

The Lansing, Illinois Fan Search letters will be postponed until issue 4 (due to the ludicrous lateness of the first), in order to give you Lansingites some time.

Tif and I are getting married July 15th on a riverboat here in Austin, then it's ten days in the British Isles. Then—for the part that may interest some of you—I'll be in San Diego for the Big Con. (Here's hoping this issue hits the stands before then.) I don't know exactly what they'll be having me do (reminder: call the programming guy back), but I'll be around. So say hi. I'd like to meet my readers.

Oh, well, on to the letters (part of the trauma of the first issue's production was that I shipped it out a bit by bit over roughly a three week

period—yeah, we're talking fucked up, I know, but no more—so, at least from local circles, I did get some nice mail rather quickly):

Dear Martin,

Just a note (which is more than *Denizens* got from you, turkey!) to let you know how much I like the first issue of *Hepcats*.

The comic-length format really seems to suit you. You were a rarity in newspaper strip format, someone able to maintain a story continuity and still deliver the required daily gag. I really thought you should stick to it, but you've gone and proved me wrong from the first.

*Hepcats* is on my subscription list until further notice. Welcome to the big-bucks world of the independents.

DOUG POTTER  
AUSTIN

Thanks, Doug. Doug is the creator of *Kitchen Sink's Denizens of Deep City*, to which, I humbly confess, I have not yet managed to write a fan letter.

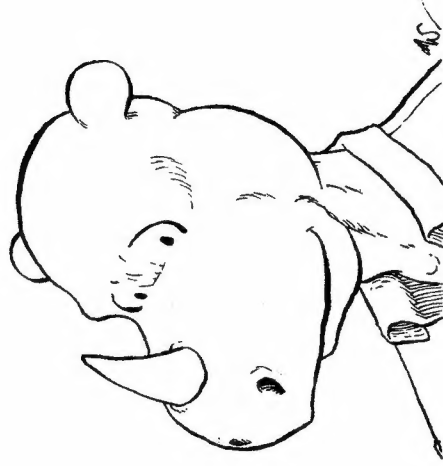
Yo, Martin,

I never thought I'd be writing your magazine...but I was very impressed with the first (hopefully not the last) issue of *Hepcats*. At first I thought it would be another collection of the 'toons that ran in the *Texan*, but was pleasantly surprised with the new story.

Enclosed is a money order for Yo. I can't believe I didn't know it was

GUNTHER FILLO™

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then I left for class. When I came back, you had left, but what to my wondering eyes did I see—photocopies of a cartoon you did for us. In case you forgot it showed a "cat" walking away, paint brush and can in hand, looking indignantly over his shoulder at graffiti that read "PLORK BORK." I still have my copy on the wall in my bedroom (right by the Margaret Bourke-White photograph of Joseph Stalin).

So imagine my surprise last July 4, when I find the "premiere" issue of *Hepcats* at Nan's here in Houston. Keep up the good work. Here's my cheque for Yo! I'll keep my eye peeled for issue #2. Till then,

ERIC D. MARTIN  
HOUSTON

Shasta Says, which keeps rearing its head, was the newspaper-strip precursor to *Hepcats*, done before my transfer to UT, and you can count "PLORK BORK" as my first and only purely political cartoon. And I still have a bag full of those goddamn T-shirts.

book and start filling it up. Don't worry if it isn't any good because in time, it will be. Nothing teaches you how to draw other than drawing itself, every day, day in and day out. And remember that comics are visual storytelling. You're only bound by your skills and your imagination—both of which are ever-evolving.

Mr. Wagner,

Long time no see.

I am a fellow alum of U of H [Houston] and remember Shasta Says as the best thing in the *Daily Cougar* (and probably still is years after its departure). In fact, we met once.

It was the spring of '88. I was in the satellite U. C., staffing a table set up by N.O.W. and D.S.A. to protest the Bork nomination. You were at the table next to us hawking Shasta Says T-shirts in order to raise money to bring out the series in book form (anything come of that?).

Anyway we chatted a little and

out and I missed your signing party at Dragon's Lair. I guess that's what happens when you spend time out of the country. Since I got back, my roommate has been taunting me with his signed copy, so when I found your address and discovered that more [copies] were available, I rejoiced.

However, that is not the reason that I'm writing. If you have the time, I would love to hear how you got started with the strip and any tips you can afford to give away to someone (much like myself) who wants to start his own strip. It's been a secret passion of mine to create a strip and I could use any help you have to offer.

Thanks for the 'toons and the time it took to read this,

JUD ROGERS  
AUSTIN

Since you didn't give me much indication of what stage you've reached artistically speaking, Jud, I'll start at the beginning: Buy a blank sketch-

YO

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Created, illustrated and published by **Martin Wagner**

**Production**

**Port Publications, Inc.**

125 E. Main St.

Port Washington, WI 53704

Circulation this issue **3,800**

Next issue on sale **August 1989**

**Distributed by**

**Action Direct**

114 "A" Bldg., 1401 Fairfax Trafficway

Kansas City, KS 66115

(913) 281-5240

**Andromeda Publications Ltd.**

2113 Dundas St. West

Toronto, Ontario M6R 1X1

Canada

(416) 535-9100

**Capital City Distribution, Inc.**

2827 Perry St.

Madison, WI 53713

(608) 274-8987

**Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.**

1720 Belmont Ave., Bay F

Baltimore, MD 21207

(301) 281-7870

FAX (301) 298-2644

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4136 S. Service Rd.

Burlington, Ontario L7L 4X5

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